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Will Hazel's Boss Clean Up?

By TOM DONNELLY

DON DEFORE, temporarily on leave from his chores as "Mr. 'B'" in NBC's "Hazel" show, is in Washington to do some research on a film he plans to produce. "It's based on an actual incident," Mr. DeFore said. "It's about those three Czech fliers who escaped from the Reds in 1950. They were commercial pilots, and they made it to West Germany. Do you remember the story? It made a big splash in the newspapers at the time. A real exciting, complicated escape."

I said I didn't recall the episode. Mr. DeFore said, "Well, anyway I think it will make a first-rate movie. The working title is 'Flight to Freedom.'"

Mrs. DeFore said, "I think you ought to change that title. It sounds like some other movie. In fact, it sounds like a lot of other movies."

Mr. DeFore said, "We'll think of something. I've been at the Pentagon, to see what material they might have on the thing and, you know, sort of find out if there'd be any possible objection to our making the movie. There doesn't seem to be any. There was another producer from Hollywood there the other day, and I gather the Pentagon isn't too enthusiastic about HIS plan. He's going to do a film of that book 'Catch-22.'"

I said I seemed to recall something in that novel about a U. S. Air Force man shooting up his own side. Way-out comedy. Mr. DeFore said, "They're probably pretty nervous at the Pentagon, what with 'Dr. Strangelove' and all."

I asked Mr. DeFore how he happened to get the idea for his movie. Mr. DeFore said, "I was doing summer stock in Maine — Ogunquit — and my wife was doing what she does a lot of, shopping. So we were in the dress department of this store and I wandered off—"

Mrs. DeFore said, "He was trying to get his mind off those price tags. A futile escape."

At the other end of the store I heard these two men talking

behind a curtain. A big booming voice and a softer voice with a Czech accent. I looked behind the curtain and it turned out to be a radio show going on. The boomer was a disc jockey. He recognized me and right away I was on the show. The Czech was one of those three fliers. He's an American citizen now. I'm part Czech so we got along great, and I decided there was a movie in his story."

Mr. DeFore has hopes of producing another film, a Western. "This has been in the works for seven years," he said. "The complications you wouldn't believe. These two young writers saw in a trade paper that I was going to produce my own movies, so they badgered me to look at a story they had. Finally I said I'd see them, and their 'story' turned out to be a 15-page outline more or less copied out of a history book. But it WAS a good idea, and they talked me into developing it with them. To get the money I was told I needed two things, name writers to work on the script, and a build-up for the girl's part. So I got in two name writers. The next thing I knew, I was in trouble with Lana Turner, of all people. Somewhere along the way, the first team of writers sold their idea to Lana's husband, Lex Barker, without a word to me. Lana and Lex got a divorce, and when her attorneys were going thru the community property, I guess, they found this story. So they slapped me with a plagiarism suit, and that dragged on and on, but finally I won."

Another member of the DeFore family is having trouble finding a suitable title. The DeFore's oldest daughter, Penny, worked at an orphanage in Korea in 1960 (she was 17), and Prentice-Hall will publish a book she wrote about her experiences. Mrs. DeFore said, "The publishers said her title is too cute. 'The Filly of Seoul.' And I guess maybe it is. They don't like 'Heart and Seoul' either."

Mr. DeFore said, "We'll think

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